CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1   1.   A method for computer implemented management of assembly manufacturer, said
2   method comprising the steps of:
3   maintaining a database listing possible suppliers for a specified assembly component;
4   hierarchically ranking said possible suppliers within said database utilizing a plurality of
5   scoring parameters;
6   automatically selecting a limited number of possible suppliers based upon said
7   hierarchical rankings;
8   issuing an invitation to a bidders conference to each of said limited number of possible
9   suppliers;
10   thereafter, specifying to each of said limited number of possible suppliers an identity of
11   all of said limited number of possible suppliers; and
12   negotiating a final price and selecting a designated supplier for said specified assembly
13   component following said bidders conference.

1   2.   The method for computer implemented management of assembly manufacturer
2   according to claim 1 wherein said step of hierarchically ranking said possible suppliers within
3   said database using a plurality of scoring parameters includes the step of hierarchically ranking
4   said possible suppliers based in part upon previous business experience with each possible
5   supplier.

1   3.   The method for computer implemented management of assembly manufacturer
2   according to claim 1 wherein said step of hierarchically ranking said possible suppliers within
3   said database using a plurality of scoring parameters includes the step of hierarchically ranking
4   said possible suppliers based in part upon confidence in stated pricing for each possible supplier.
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4.   The method for computer implemented management of assembly manufacturer according to claim 1 wherein said step of hierarchically ranking said possible suppliers within said database using a plurality of scoring parameters includes the step of hierarchically ranking said possible suppliers based in part upon demonstrated manufacturing performance for each possible supplier.

5.   The method for computer implemented management of assembly manufacturer according to claim 1 wherein the step of automatically selecting a limited number of possible suppliers based upon said hierarchical ranking comprises the step of selecting at least a top three hierarchically ranked possible suppliers.

6.   The method for computer implemented management of assembly manufacturer according to claim 1 further including the step issuing a Request for Quotation (RFQ) for said specified assembly component prior to hierarchically ranking said possible suppliers within said database utilizing a plurality of scoring parameters.

7.   The method for computer implemented management of assembly manufacturer according to claim 6 further including the step of reissuing said Request for Quotation (RFQ) for said specified assembly component after automatically selecting a limited number of possible suppliers based upon said hierarchical rankings.

8.   The method for computer implemented management of assembly manufacturer according to claim 7 further including the step validating responses received to said reissued Request for Quotation (RFQ) utilizing cost estimates.

9.   A computer system for managing assembly manufacturer, said computer system comprising:

a database listing possible suppliers for a specified assembly component;

means for hierarchically ranking said possible suppliers within said database utilizing a plurality of scoring parameters;

means for automatically selecting a limited number of possible suppliers based upon said hierarchical rankings;

means for issuing an invitation to a bidder's conference to each of said limited number of possible suppliers; and

means for thereafter specifying to each of said limited number of possible suppliers an identity of all of said limited number of possible suppliers.